Disciplinary Thinking

Introduction

Each discipline offers students both content knowledge and ways of knowing and reasoning specific to the discipline. This section provides information on developing students’ disciplinary thinking. The links below contain specific strategies for teaching disciplinary thinking, research into how students learn disciplinary thinking, and disciplinary thinking in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.

General Resources

“Strategies for Teaching Thinking and Promoting Intellectual Development in Online Classes,” William Peirce, Prince George’s Community College, 2001. Presents and explains strategies for online courses that teach students disciplinary thinking, promote interactivity, and support intellectual growth. Includes examples and links to numerous sites related to these strategies. Many of these methods can easily be used in the standard face-to-face classroom.

http://academic.pgcc.edu/~wpeirce/MCCCTR/ttol.html [1]

Teaching Disciplinary Thinking Through Small Group Activities (Princeton University, McGraw Center, The Scholar as Teacher Tip Sheet No. 23).
Provides a list of five suggestions for using small groups to encourage discipline-specific thinking.


“Beyond Coverage: Teaching Disciplinary Thinking in the Introductory Course,” Lendon Calder, Augustana College. Reported in Teaching Concerns, a publication of the University of Virginia Resource Center, Spring 2004. Describes Calder’s re-visioning of his content-oriented history classes to focus instead on six cognitive activities characteristic of “historical thinking.” Reports the results of student “think-alouds” assessing this new approach.


“Ways of Thinking and Practising in Biology and History: Disciplinary Aspects of Teaching and Learning Environments,” Dai Hounsell and Charles Anderson, University of Edinburgh. Reports on a study of undergraduate courses in biology and history showing that as students learned course content, they also learned ways of thinking and knowing characteristic of the discipline.


Disciplinary Styles in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, Carnegie Foundation’s Gallery of Teaching and Learning.
This site offers insights into disciplinary styles of thinking and their relationship to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL). Gives examples of scholars’ work in teaching disciplinary thinking plus resources and related links.  

See also Teaching Critical Thinking [6] and Writing Across the Curriculum [7] on this website.

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Links